

Back Story

Quarterly Newsletter



Autumn 2024
Issue 12



WELCOME.

Welcome to the Autumn edition of Back Story. This quarterly newsletter aims to bring you the latest news, recent research, and up-to-date guidance on staying healthy in the workplace and beyond.

In this edition, we offer some tips on how to reset your rhythm and make the most of Autumn. We bring you new research on the role of exercise in reducing symptoms of depression, as well as tips on how to boost your immunity. Finally, we continue with our new section, 'Listen, Read and Watch', sharing some ideas for books, podcasts, films and more!





BACK TO BASICS

TOP 5 TIPS TO EMBRACE AUTUMN

Autumn can be a great time to recover from a hectic summer, take stock, and plan for Winter. Here are our top tips.



If you would like further advice, get in touch with your Back in Action UK team on 020 7480 5976 or email at enquiries@backinactionuk.com

1

Reset Your Rhythm

The change in seasons from summer to Autumn is a wonderful time for a reset as we shift from a busy holiday period to a slower rhythm. The summer tends to be a time of high energy when we break from our normal routine with holidays, visiting families and attending parties. As we start to spend more time indoors, we can start to slow the pace and embrace the quieter, colder months. It can be easy to slump in front of the TV, but why not plan a new mindful activity or crafting project to encourage a more restorative rhythm.

2

Eat in Season

As the weather cools, a season of abundance begins for British fruit and vegetable harvests. Eating seasonal foods (grown locally to you) is not only environmentally friendly but also brings more variety into your diet, provides more nutrient rich ingredients, and tastes better. Autumn fruits such as figs are high in potassium and calcium, helping to boost bone health and regulate blood pressure. Pumpkins, squash and carrots contain beta-carotene, which can help support our immune system.

3

Sunset Watch

Autumn sunsets can be more spectacular than at other times of the year. This is due to the shallow angle of the sun, a reduction in air humidity and a tendency for thin, high clouds at this time of the year. This combination creates a long lasting, vivid sunset. Research has shown there are many health benefits to watching the sunsets including improving mood, reducing stress and even boosting sleep quality. It also provides an opportunity to reflect on your day and tune into your inner thoughts and feelings without distraction. Check out sunsettimes.org.uk for up-to-date times for sunrise and sunset.

4

Walking Meditation

As the leaves change colour and fall, they provide a burst of colour and interest. This makes it a perfect time of year to try walking meditation. We often walk on autopilot, letting our mind worry, plan and analyse. A walking meditation helps us to bring the body and mind in synchronisation and allows us to connect with the present moment. As you walk, tune in and observe your surroundings, note the sounds, smells and physical sensations, and settle into the rhythm of your walk. For more ideas, check out www.headspace.com.

5

Prepare for Winter

This is a great time to gently start preparing for the winter months. Cold weather can have a negative impact on health, particularly in older people, so ensuring that your home is winter ready is important. Check that your boiler has been serviced and is in working order and pipes are properly insulated before the winter weather arrives. Why not batch cook and freeze some healthy, warming stews and soups to have in stock. Other jobs include clearing gutters, safely storing garden furniture, changing torches, bleeding radiators and draught proofing windows.



BACK IT UP

NEW RESEARCH ON EXERCISE AND MENTAL HEALTH

This section of our newsletter brings you some of the latest research in the field of occupational health and general wellbeing.

In this edition, we examine how new research on the role of exercise in supporting mental health. Experts think that the link between mental health benefits and exercise relates to processes in the brain which alleviate depression symptoms such as low energy and brain fog.

It is widely known that exercise is beneficial for physical health, and there is also a growing awareness about its role in supporting mental health. The reasons behind this link have not been fully understood. However, new research carried out at University College London (UCL) has shed light on why exercise can have a positive impact on mental health conditions such as depression.

“Regular moderate exercise can help elevate mood and reduce anxiety.”

Depression is common, and a leading cause of absence from work. The main approach to managing depression has been with anti-depressant medications and psychological therapy. However, not all people respond to this treatment and more recently, doctors are encouraging regular exercise as a way of managing mild to moderate depression. In fact, some research has shown that exercise is as effective as medication for this patient group.

The UCL researchers propose that aerobic activities decrease inflammation in the body, supports messages from our natural feel-good hormone ‘dopamine’, and this in turn helps to boost our motivation and our desire to exert ourselves and get moving. They conclude that helping to remove the barriers for people to exercise is an important step in tackling our current mental health problems.

Guidelines on regular exercise

Health experts advise us to do the following types exercise on a regular basis:

1. Moderate Aerobic activity (e.g. brisk walking, gardening, cycling or swimming) for 150 minutes per week
2. Strengthening Activity (e.g. press ups or lifting weights) for 2 sessions per week.

If you would like support to start exercising regular, our physiotherapists can help!





BACK FOR GOOD

MOVE FOR IMMUNITY

The immune system protects us from disease by defending against various pathogens and microorganisms such as viruses and bacteria. It does this through a complex series of defence responses that work together to prevent these organisms entering and becoming established in the body. There are several factors that can have an impact on the function and efficiency of our immune system. Stress, age, our diet and the medications we take can all have an effect and may mean some of us are more susceptible to catching infections than others. There is evidence that regular exercise can help boost our immune system. In fact, people who exercise regularly were over 25% less likely to catch a common cold during the year.

Here are our 3 favourite ways to exercise for immunity.

Walking

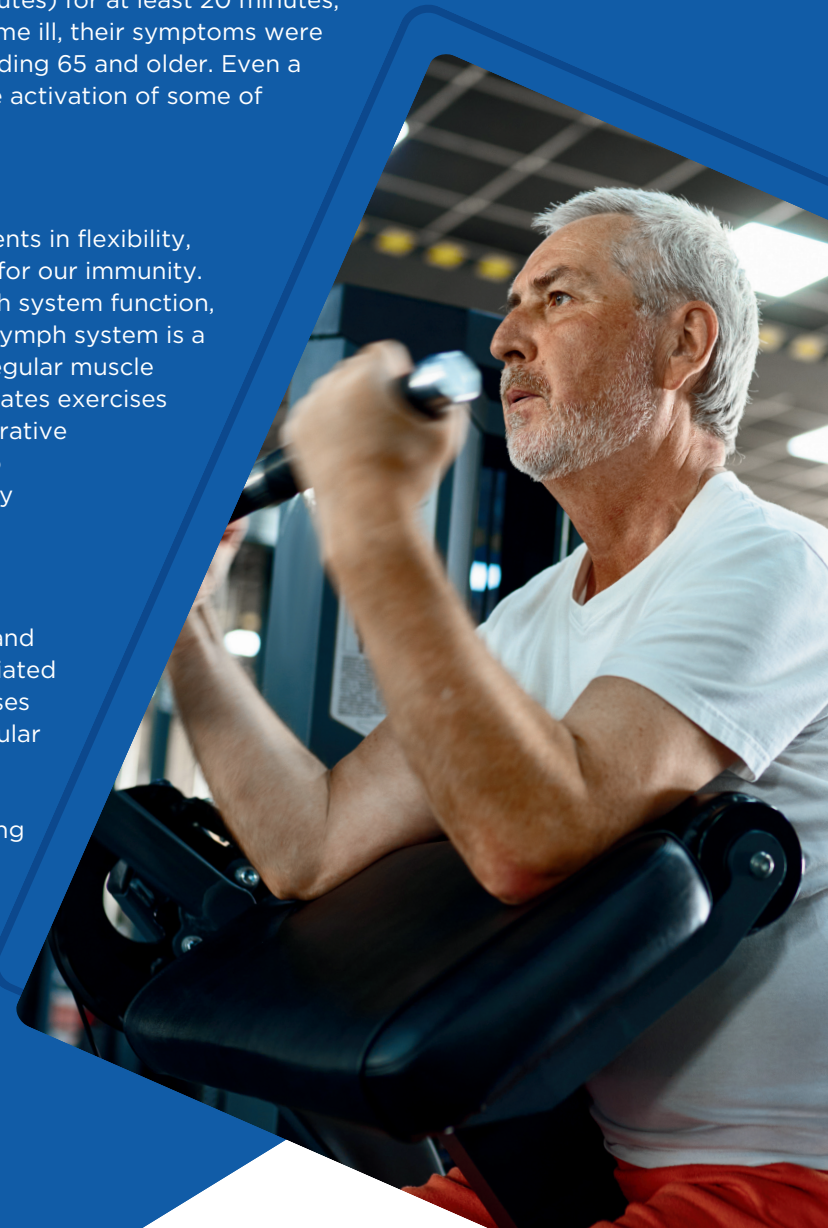
Walking comes top of the list in terms of positive impact on immunity. A recent study by Harvard Medical School found that people who took a brisk walk (a pace of around 2-4 miles per hour - or walking a mile in about 15-25 minutes) for at least 20 minutes, 5 days a week took fewer sick days and if they did become ill, their symptoms were much milder. This effect was seen in all age groups including 65 and older. Even a single session of brisk walking leads to an increase in the activation of some of our immune cells.

Pilates

When we think of Pilates, we tend to think of improvements in flexibility, posture and core strength but it may also have benefits for our immunity. This could be down to a combination of improving lymph system function, more effective breathing, and a reduction in stress. The lymph system is a key component of our immune system, and it requires regular muscle action to function well. The rhythmic, gentle action of Pilates exercises are great at stimulating blood and lymph flow. The restorative nature of Pilates along with the breathwork also helps to activate the soothing part of the nervous system, thereby reducing stress and supporting immunity.

Strength Training

As we get older, we naturally start to lose muscle mass and strength - this is called 'sarcopenia'. The decline is associated with an increased risk of developing inflammatory diseases such as Rheumatoid Arthritis. The good news is that regular strength training can reduce sarcopenia and help build muscle mass. It also has the potential to boost immunity due to the regeneration process that takes place following training. The stimulus of training leads to a series of responses in the body including the activation of important immune cells and anti-inflammatory chemicals, thereby supporting the immune system.





LISTEN, READ WATCH

IN THIS NEW FEATURE, WE BRING YOU CURRENT AND INSPIRING IDEAS FOR CONTENT YOU CAN LISTEN TO, READ AND WATCH.

Listen:

The Drive Podcast by Peter Attia

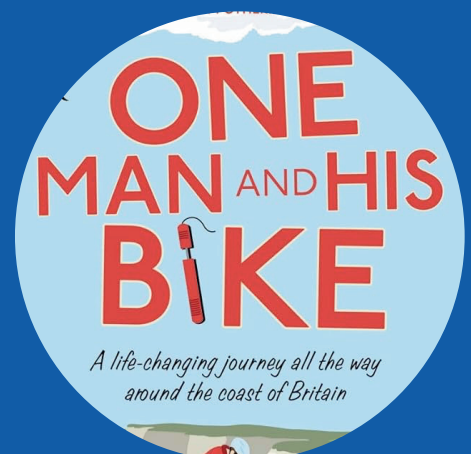
The Peter Attis Drive Podcast is a deep-dive into maximising longevity, from physical to cognitive to emotional health. Peter Attia is a doctor specialising in the applied science of longevity, which is the study of how human health span can be extended. The podcast features guests who are experts in their fields of exercise, nutrition, sleep, mental health, and more, offering fascinating insights and practical guidance to help you optimise performance and wellbeing.



Read:

One Man and his Bike by Mike Carter

This book is a humorous, mid-life road trip adventure by Mike Carter, who decided to give up his day job and cycle the coast of Britain. He chronicles his encounters with some of the colourful characters he meets along this epic 5000 mile journey - including drunken priests and drag queens! He shares his discoveries of what people in Britain are really like and inspires us with stories of kindness and warmth.



Watch:

Younger - Documentary film by Danielle Sellwood

This documentary film about track and field athletes whose ages range from 69-85 is a celebration of old age. The film follows four, mainly female, older athletes and explores how their sport has helped them foster friendships, maintain their energy, and make life worth living. Despite suffering bereavements, illness and depression, the subjects show that participating in a shared activity can transform lives. An uplifting and heart-warming film that portrays getting older in a positive light.





BACK OFFICE

MEET THE BACK IN ACTION UK TEAM

Back in Action UK are a team of experienced occupational health physiotherapists and support staff who provide workplace health and physical health solutions to our clients all over the UK.

In this edition, we would like to introduce you to team member Evi Denham, Occupational Physiotherapy Client Care Administrator.

Evi Denham

Occupational Health Physiotherapy
Client Care Administrator

Tell us about your role?

My main role is making sure patients get booked in with the physiotherapists, so I speak on the phone most of the day. When patients call the main Back in Action UK phone number they will speak to myself, or my colleague Michele, so we can book or re-schedule using the main booking system and get the patients seen as soon as possible.

What do you enjoy most about your role?

I only started this role in May this year, but I really like speaking to the patients as they are all lovely and the physios are a nice group. I am based at the Sano office in Leeds and enjoy coming into work - its a great office.

Where did you work before Back in Action?

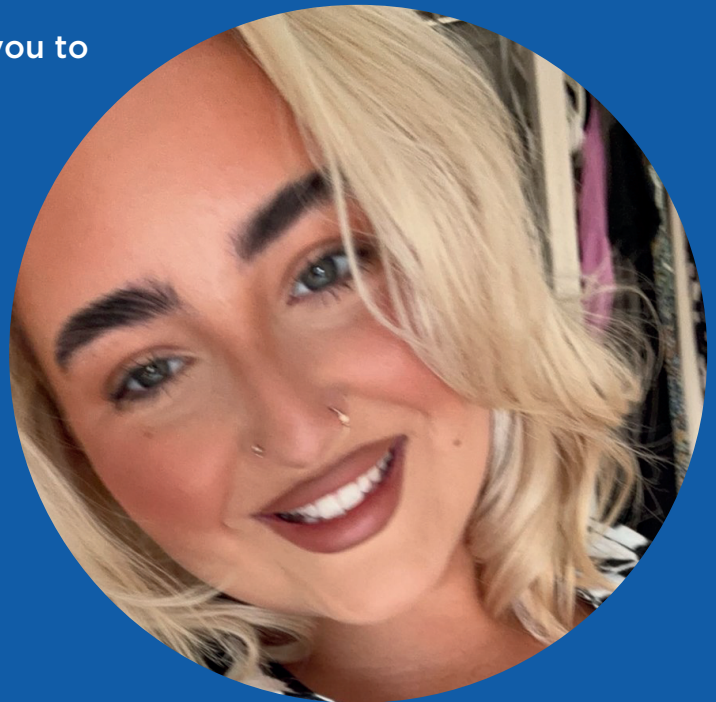
I moved from a completely different industry. I had been working at a hotel, which included bar work and waitressing. I wanted a change so I could have my weekends free and try something different.

How do you keep fit?

I started playing badminton recently as I'd been joining in with my parents after they started playing and really enjoyed it. So now I play once a week with my boyfriend and parents.

What was your first job?

I originally trained as a make-up artists, completing a Professional Make-up course involving six week of training, assessments and online exams. The idea for the course came after I did the make-up for the bridesmaids at my sister's wedding. Everyone was really pleased, and I enjoyed it so I decided to do some training. Since then, I have done make-up for other bridesmaids and have a full make-up kit that I've collected over the years.



How do you spend your time outside work?

I still love to do make-up and often spend my weekends helping with make-up at weddings or girls getting ready for a big night out. I'd really like to get into Asian bridal make-up as it's very creative, bold and colourful.

Tell us about your home life.

I live in a busy household with my mum, dad and grandad. It's fun living with my grandad as he's very entertaining and quite a character. I have three sisters and a brother and my parents also have three grandchildren (and another one on the way!) so it's very busy but fun at the weekends!



New Accreditation

Back In Action UK are pleased to announce that they have been awarded Safe Effective Quality Occupation Health Service (SEQOHS) accreditation. SEQOHS is a scheme that sets standards for occupational health providers to ensure they deliver the highest quality services. The award demonstrates that Back In Actin UK have achieved the required standards of care, and are able to understand, anticipate and deliver what each client organisation needs. Becoming a SEQOHS accredited provider requires strict adherence to standards from governance and finance through to communication and quality assurance. Back In Action UK, can now demonstrate the breadth of value they bring to commissioners of services and to employees through benchmarking.

Workplace Mental Health

A recent industry survey reported that work-related stress is the biggest health concern for employees - with more than 17 million working days lost between 2022-2023 for reasons linked to work-related stress, anxiety and depression. The Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Stakeholder Alliance have published a new white paper calling for the government to develop a national workplace mental health strategy to help tackle the problem. In addition, they are urging businesses to commit to ensuring that their workplaces adequately supports mental health of their employees. A preventative approach, with a focus on understanding the underlying causes of work-related stress, will be key. Education and training for managers to identify concerns and responding to these with clear protocols, support and measures to address the stressors will pave the way for a more positive working environment.

NHS Wait Times

UK businesses are facing significant financial challenges due to the impact of long NHS waiting times. A large healthcare provider carried out research and discovered that nearly 60% of all employees report difficulties getting access to NHS services due to lack of availability and wait times. This leads to frustration and means that health conditions are being left untreated, thereby contributing to employee absence. As a result, nearly half of the employers surveyed recognised that access to private healthcare is a top health and wellbeing priority for their employees. Investing in providing access to healthcare for common problems such as mental health and musculoskeletal disorders proved to be cost effective. In addition, offering wellbeing programmes that address factors such as excess weight and inactivity, reduces the risk of ill health, employee absence, and further pressure on NHS services.





 **Back in Action**^{UK}
Keeping workplaces moving



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